

A RESOLUTION stating Council's support for improving the City's Strong athletic field system to increase playing capacity, clarifying the conditions under which Council extends its support, and directing the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation to prioritize the order that athletic fields will be improved and to collect additional information that will more clearly link the proposed improvements with demand for particular sports.

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Vote: 9-0

Committee: Parks, Education and Libraries

Sponsor: STEINBRUECK

STATING-POLICY, PARKS, ATHLETIC-FIELDS, PLAYGROUNDS-AND-PLAYFIELDS
Athletic Field Lighting, Joint Athletic Facility Development Program, JAFD
Note to users: {- indicates start of text that has been amended out
-} indicates end of text that has been amended out
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A RESOLUTION stating Council's support for improving the City's athletic field system to increase playing capacity, clarifying the conditions under which Council extends its support, and directing the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation to prioritize the order that athletic fields will be improved and to collect additional information that will more clearly link the proposed improvements with demand for particular sports.

WHEREAS, the City Council supports the development of more athletic fields to accommodate an increase in sports participation by youth and adult players; and

WHEREAS, the City Council supports the Mayor's proposal not to install lights at Queen Anne Bowl, Meadowbrook playfield and lights and synthetic turf at West Magnolia Playfield; and

WHEREAS, the City Council supports the Mayor's proposal to improve West Seattle Stadium as both a football field and a track and field venue; and

WHEREAS, installing lights and synthetic turf will significantly increase the number of hours that can be played on the City's athletic fields; and

WHEREAS, improving the City's athletic fields represents a multi-million dollar long term financial investment and therefore, the ability to install improvements at various fields will be limited by fiscal constraints; and

WHEREAS, the City Council supports the intent of the JAFDP to

increase athletic field capacity but it has not received adequate information to endorse specific sites and specific improvements at each site as presented in the 2002 Joint Athletic Facility Development Program ("JAFDP"); and

WHEREAS, the Council believes improvements at the City's athletic fields should be prioritized because it will be years before the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation ("Parks") obtains funding for all the proposed improvements in the JAFDP, participation has increased in certain sports and declined in others, and improvements at some athletic field sites may have fewer impacts to neighbors relative to other sites; and

WHEREAS, Parks has demonstrated an increase in the use of athletic fields but it has not provided data that shows how much unmet demand exists for each sport due to limited field availability; and

WHEREAS, while the City Council supports the development of athletic fields, potential impacts on neighborhoods need to be considered and mitigated where necessary; and

WHEREAS, the Council believes field improvements should be distributed throughout the City to the extent possible; and

WHEREAS, the majority of the City's athletic fields are within residential zones and increasing the number of hours of play at athletic fields could negatively impact neighborhoods by generating an increase in traffic, noise, lighting, and parking if not adequately mitigated; and

WHEREAS, the City Council supports scheduling games to end at 10 p.m. at certain lighted athletic fields located in residential areas and while this is a reduction in evening playing hours at some fields, the overall number of hours available for play will be increasing with the installation of certain field improvements; and

WHEREAS, the City Council supports the current Parks policy of giving priority access to youth sports teams but it believes that increases in demand for youth sports should be scheduled in the afternoons and early evenings to the extent possible to preserve existing and future time slots allocated to adult players; and

WHEREAS, Parks should encourage more scheduled use of fields during times that the fields are underutilized, such as on weekends; and

WHEREAS, while the City Council supports the development of athletic fields, Parks should study any potential impacts of lights on fields situated near critical habitat areas before proceeding with lighting these fields, avoid creating habitat areas where they might be impacted by field lights, and mitigate any impacts to the extent practicable; and

WHEREAS, the City Council believes that Park sponsored and non-Park sponsored sports teams should be given equal access to City owned athletic fields, especially since Parks does not sponsor certain sports; and

WHEREAS, the City Council will separately review the athletic field development plan proposed for Sand Point Magnuson Park and, considering the magnitude of the proposed improvements and potential impacts to the residential neighborhood, the City Council may want to impose unique conditions on the development of the athletic fields when approving changes to the Sand Point Magnuson Park Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, the City Council believes that Seattle's user fees for athletic fields should not be significantly less than King County's user fees to avoid creating outside demand for City fields; and

WHEREAS, the City Council encourages Parks to establish user fees that more closely recover the costs of maintaining and operating athletic fields and that reflect the various costs of different field types and lights; and

WHEREAS, the City Council believes that Parks should explore potential options for using underutilized athletic facilities, such as Memorial Stadium, to maximize use of existing facilities within the City; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE, THE MAYOR CONCURRING, THAT:

Section 1. Prioritizing Field Improvements: Parks should prioritize field improvements in the following manner:

A. Replace old lighting systems where light and glare impacts adjacent residential properties. Parks may limit funding the number of lighting replacement projects to two per budget biennium. If Parks believes that a lighting replacement project that addresses player safety is a higher priority than lighting replacement projects that address spill and glare, it may propose funding for these projects and explain its rationale during that time.

B. Identify sites where impacts from improvements have fewer negative impacts to adjacent residences relative to other sites and install improvements at these sites first. Improvements at these sites should then be installed in the following order:

1. Parks should install synthetic turf at sites that currently have lights and install lights at those sites that already have synthetic or all weather turf before installing both lights and synthetic turf at sites that currently have neither.

2. Parks should install improvements that increase capacity for sports that have demonstrated a steady increase in participation over time or that have greater unmet demand relative to other sports.

3. Parks should distribute field improvements throughout the City to the extent possible and install improvements in areas of the City that lack adequate field capacity relative to other areas.

Parks shall report back to the Parks, Education, and Libraries Committee during the first quarter of 2003 with the proposed list of JAFDP improvements prioritized in this manner. Beginning in 2004,

Parks must specify how a JAFDP project fits into the above prioritization scheme prior to submitting requests for funding or requests to accept funding for particular fields. For 2003 budget requests, Parks shall provide a rationale for why improvements for the particular fields that Parks is proposing to improve in 2003 are of greater priority than other fields.

Section 2. Linking Field Improvements to Unmet Demand

To determine the appropriate level of investment and track increases in trends, Parks shall track the following information and, beginning with the 2005-06 budget biennium, provide a report during each budget biennium to Council that links proposed field improvements to unmet demand trends:

- * Number of hours/games scheduled each season broken down by sport, league, and age group
- * Number of games that organizations play outside the City
- * Annual hours scheduled on Seattle School District Property for non-school sports
- * Number and type of fields available each season for each sport
- * Number of in-city and out-of-city players for each organized league
- * When (time of day, weekend vs. weekday, and month) and how often an organization/team/league is denied a request to schedule a game or practice due to lack of field availability within the City of Seattle (denials for particular fields are of less concern than denials for any field availability throughout the City).

For the 2003-04 biennium budget review process, Parks shall submit the following information on any JAFDP related expenditures listed in the 2003-04 CIP: 1) Increase in hours that will occur; 2) Sports that will likely be scheduled during the additional hours; 3) age group that will benefit from increase in hours.

Section 3. Shut-off Times for Lighted Fields

For city athletic fields that receive new lights after the adoption of this resolution, Council requests that all scheduled games end at 10 p.m. Monday through Thursday evenings. Lights can be left on for an additional 15 minutes to allow players time to safely leave the field if security lighting is not available. Council also encourages adopting a "no lights" policy on Sunday evenings for new fields. As proposed by the Mayor, Parks should also end games at 10 p.m. every night that the fields are scheduled at Miller, Ballard, Bitter Lake, Loyal Heights, Judkins, and Soundview playfields. Should Parks continue with its current policy, the Council will consider other measures to advance these recommendations.

Section 4. Scheduling Athletic Fields

During the 1st quarter of 2003, Parks shall submit a report showing how scheduling practices would be impacted if Department sponsored

sports groups are not given scheduling priority over non-Department sponsored sports groups, distinguishing between youth and adult groups. Parks shall also identify the percentage of Department sponsored sport groups that are neighborhood based, i.e., membership is geographically based vs. based on some other affiliation.

Section 5. Establishing User Fees

In developing user fees, Parks shall consider the costs associated with operating and maintaining athletic fields and how much King County is charging for athletic field use to ensure consistency, while at the same time setting fees at a reasonable level so as not to restrict access. Parks should continue its current policy of setting different fee levels for youth and adult users and for lighted vs. non-lighted fields. Parks should also consider the costs associated with different field types when setting user fees.

Section 6. Public Involvement Process for Site Specific Planning Decisions

Specific improvements that increase the playing capacity of athletic fields shall be based on a thorough public involvement process. Parks must also demonstrate it has conducted public workshops for residents within one-eighth (1/8) of a mile of the affected field to solicit comments and suggestions on design and potential impacts in a manner that provides residents a full and fair opportunity to be heard. During the public workshops, Parks will describe the proposed improvements, the increase in hours of use and traffic that are anticipated and various options to mitigate any adverse impacts identified to the extent practicable.

Section 7. Underutilized Fields

Parks shall explore the possibility of scheduling underutilized athletic fields, such as Memorial Stadium, and present a plan to the Parks, Education, and Libraries Committee in the first quarter of 2003 on various options and the feasibility of increasing use at underutilized fields within the City.

Adopted by the City Council the ____ day of _____, 2002,
and signed by me in open session in authentication of its adoption
this ____ day of _____, 2002.

President of the City Council

THE MAYOR CONCURRING:

Mayor

Filed by me this ____ day of _____, 2002.

City Clerk

10/7/2002